

# MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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## THE MINISTRY OF MASONRY

What is Masonry? What is it trying to teach? What does it seek to do? Above all, what can it do for the man who receives it into his heart, loves it, and lives in the light of it? What profound ministry may it render to the young man who enters its temple in the morning of life, when the dew is on his days and the birds are singing in his heart? Let me try to answer these questions this summer afternoon in the spirit of Count Tolstoi, who must hereafter be numbered with those prophets and bards—with poets like Goethe and Burns, musicians like Mozart, patriots like Mazzini and Washington—who loved this historic order. Such names shine like stars in the crown of humanity, and none with truer lustre than that of Tolstoi, who was a teacher of purity, pity, and peace among men.

Time out of mind Masonry has been defined as a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols. That is so far true—far enough, indeed, to describe a world-encircling fellowship and its far-ramifying influence. But it is not of the extent of Masonry that I wish to speak this afternoon, but rather, of its depth—its service to the lonely inner life of man where the issues of character and destiny are determined for good or ill. No more worthy purpose can inspire any order than the earnest, active endeavour to bring men—first the individual man, and then, so far as possible, those united with him—to a deeper, richer fellowship with spiritual reality. Since this is the purpose of Masonry, let us enquire as to what it is, whence it came, and how it seeks to reach the souls of men where the real battles of life are fought, now with shouts of victory, now with sobs of defeat.

It is true that Masonry is not a religion, still less a cult, but it has religiously preserved some things of highest importance to religion—among them the right of each individual soul to its own religious faith. Holding aloof from separate sects and creeds, it has taught all of them to respect and tolerate each other; asserting a principle broader than any of them—the sanctity of the soul and the duty of every man to revere, or at least regard with charity, what is sacred to his fellows. Our order is like the crypts underneath the old cathedrals—a place where men of every creed, who long for something deeper and truer, older and newer than they have hitherto known, meet and unite. Having put away childish things, they find themselves made one by a profound and child-like faith, each bringing down into that quiet crypt his own pearl of great price.



"The Hindu his innate disbelief in this world, and his unhesitating belief in another world; the Buddhist his perception of an eternal law, his submission to it, his gentleness, his pity; the Mohammedan, if nothing else, his sobriety; the Jew his clinging through good and evil days, to the one God, who loveth righteousness and whose name is 'I AM'; the Christian, that which is better than all, if those who doubt it would only try it—our love of God, call Him what you will, manifested in our love of man, our love of the living, our love of the dead, our living and undying love. Who knows but that the crypt of the past may yet become the church of the future?"

. . . To one who regards mankind with tenderness, a time like this is full of hope, but full of many perils also. Men are confused, troubled, and strangely alone. Anything is possible. Forms of faith are changing, and many are bewildered—as witness the number of those running to and fro, following every wandering light, and falling, often, into the bogs of fanaticism. Oh the pathos of it! A strange indifference has settled over the world, but underneath it there is a profound, unsatisfied hunger. There is a mood today which soon will utter a cry, and it will be a cry for a more vivid sense of God: that is our hope. Yet that cry may fling many a soul upon the bosom of doubt and despair: that is our fear.

Amid this peril, Masonry brings men together at the altar of prayer, keeps alive faith in the truths that make us men, seeking, by every resource of art, to make tangible the power of love, the worth of beauty, and the reality of the ideal. Who can measure such a ministry, who can describe it!

—*Joseph Fort Newton.*

## GEORGE HUNTER

Another great leader of our beloved Craft has answered the summons. Our friend and brother was called on Friday evening, March 28th, and those of us who were numbered among his intimates will have to be satisfied with the happy memory of a genuine and well esteemed fellow workman. No more will we hear the lilting Irish voice which brought so much happiness wherever the influence of George Hunter touched.

Perhaps the inner character of the man can be sensed in words that came from his own pen and undoubtedly were prompted by that generous heart and soul which was so evident in everything he did. Listen for a moment to what George told his brethren: "Out of my experience I have learned one great truth; one cannot get more out of anything than we put into it. To attain great heights we must climb and bear all the hardships of climbing. Just as one finds injustice and hardships in life, so one finds color and vivid interest. It is not life that matters, but the courage



you bring into it. If we meet the challenge of life with courage, then whether we succeed or fail (in a material sense) we shall have known the joy in the effort. We pass through time, we live, we suffer, we die, but not one of us knows no happy days. When we reach the years of understanding, we know that the good outweighs the evil, that happiness is greater than misery, that men and women are better than they are often painted, and that God is good."

To find the imprint of George Hunter on the life of the Masonic Craft in the Province of Manitoba one needs only make a survey of the Annual Proceedings for the past quarter of a century. But, over and above his contribution to the Masonic family we will never fully estimate the good he did in South-west Manitoba. Officially he was the School Inspector. Actually, he was in the forefront of every community enterprise regardless of personal inconvenience.

Yes, he was a born leader of men—one whose leadership sprang not from unbridled ambition or unappeasable hunger for power and domination over his fellow beings—but from a powerful inner conviction of having a moral, spiritual mission, for which any material means were but instruments. George saw the mission and made it his duty to make a most commendable contribution to the general progress of humanity.

Let us pause for a moment and give thanks for this noble craftsman—this builder of the Temple. He made good use of the tools of Freemasonry. He loved and was loved by his fellows. His memory shall be kept green and fragrant because of the things he did for others.

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## OUR GROWING MEMBERSHIP

When the Grand Secretary reports on the statistics of the jurisdiction at the Annual Communication in June he will tell us that our membership, as of December 31st, 1951, was 14,385. This prompts us to make a comparison. Ten years ago, it was reported that the membership, as of December 31st, 1941, number 9,994. Thus, in the past decade we have added to our number a nett increase of 4,391, or 44%. This gives us good reason to remark that Freemasonry commands an increasing interest in the population of the province.

We know, from reports emanating from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, that our population shows no such increase. The figures we quote are revealing. Let us measure up to the high mark of brotherhood and carry the ideals of the Craft into every activity so that the next decade may bring a greater achievement.



## ARE YOU GUILTY?

How often do we see a brother take his three degrees in Masonry, only to find that shortly thereafter, he loses all interest in the Fraternity? He doesn't even take time out to consider the advisability of giving it a fair trial, nor does he think his time is worth while. Perhaps a little application by the brother in studying and delving into the principles of Masonry would increase his desire for further knowledge. However, without this attempt at further knowledge, we feel that the brother has not availed himself of the many opportunities offered by the Craft.

We have often wondered what the cause may be. Perhaps we ourselves are somewhat to blame for just such a lack of interest. Maybe we have overlooked some small detail whereby we could have aroused enough interest in this brother to keep him from staying away. What more can we offer than fraternalism which exists among all the brethren and which must be so evident to all who partake of Masonry.

While we pride ourselves on being members of the outstanding Fraternity, yet we should not forget that those who enter the portals of Masonry, may some day be leaders in the Craft. Let us note some of the outstanding personalities of the world today and we must need be convinced of the true value of the principles for which our Fraternity stands. There are so many of these figures who are real men and Masons. Their efforts are undoubtedly directed toward a better place for all of us to live, so that there may be freedom from want and freedom to worship as we please.

Should we not as Masons make every effort to cement our fraternal ties and friendships and help build for the future a more solid foundation of true understanding among friends and brothers. To do this we must join with our fellow Masons and partake of the many offerings of our Fraternity. Join with us and help us promote the new spirit which prevails in the world today.

—*Historiology.*

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## OUR HERITAGE

Today is but a threshold. You and I cannot dream what lies ahead. There is a Land of Promise in the tomorrow, but it is not ours to pierce the veil and see what lies beyond. Life is an expectancy and it is ever the indefiniteness of the future that makes life really worth living.

We take for commonplace what our fathers could never think to be possible. We cannot conceive the potentialities that lie at our door, yet, when this generation is gone, we will leave to those who come after us, a birthright, a something yet to be discovered.



A hundred years ago the atmosphere was simply space—gas was only a smell.

The first microbe had not at that time disclosed its identity and the fact that there are battling hosts in every drop of human blood, if declared then, would have earned the protagonist of such a theory nothing short of a padded cell.

Piped water did not come to the people of the Red River Settlement through a tap; the method of delivery was the sorely tried community pump or the open river. When evening shadows fell, the best illumination of the pioneer was from tallow dips and ignition was caused by the contact of flint and steel. The simple sulphur match had not then been invented.

Fabric was woven by handloom and the only horse-power known to our early settler was four-legged and had a tail.

Steamboats were still imaginings in the brain of Fulton and the wheels of the steam engine had not even moved in George Stephenson's head.

It took a letter two weeks to reach Boston from Baltimore and mails or packets, as they were termed, came to the settlers at Red River from the Old Land twice a year.

Lord Selkirk never lit a gas jet nor reposed his frame in a Pullman berth. The sewing machine of a hundred years ago consisted of eleven parts—ten fingers and a needle.

In common with our neighbours, Manitoba has enjoyed the benefits of all this progress. Only eighty years ago our country was heralded to the world as a hyperborean region, a wilderness, fit only for the nomadic tribes who roamed its wide expanse and relied upon Nature for sustenance.

And what do we find to-day? The desert place has been made to give forth a food production sufficient to meet a world demand. What a contrast to that of one of our first settlers who from a planting of four quarts of seed reaped twelve and a half bushels of wheat.

In our own day we see the veil of Nature being rent and from the bosom of the earth, wealth in untold value pouring forth after concealment for thousands of years.

The river and the waterfall—vagrants in the day of the pioneer—have been harnessed and trained to serve the will of man. The beast of burden, the toiler at the loom, the man at the plough have all been displaced by the whirring steeds of steel; by a touch of an insignificant button a great metropolis can be flooded with a dazzling glare of light equal to the blaze of the noon-day sun.

Progress and improvement have indeed marked the pages of history in material things, and so is it with the spiritual values of life.

In the realm of our own Masonic Craft we have had progress and advancement. Intelligence has taken from us some of the myth and legend of other days and our inclination today is to



establish our story upon the solid footings of reality. In the process, Freemasonry has passed through every phase of human development.

We have read somewhere "that if we write on monuments of stone or metal, they will disintegrate and yield to the influence of time, but, if we write on human hearts, we may produce an enduring testimonial." Freemasonry has so written on the souls of men and we can find an abundant evidence of its influence in the records and among the archives of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. May it ever be thus. May we carry on our great heritage.

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## THE CONSTITUTION TELLS US

**THAT:** A petition for membership by initiation or affiliation **MUST** be sponsored by two Master Masons who must both be members of the Lodge to whom the petition is presented.

**THAT:** If a Committee of Enquiry has filed a report with the Secretary of the Lodge then the petition cannot be returned to the petitioner. If unfavourable the Master shall declare the petition rejected; if favourable then it must be balloted upon.

**THAT:** Relative to parliamentary law, Masonic Lodges cannot adopt any text book upon that subject beyond the rules laid down in the Constitution and By-laws, as all such proceedings as "Calling the question," "going into committee of the whole house," "calling for yeas and nays," etc., are all improper, Masonically.

**THAT:** The dues for the current year of a new member receiving the degrees shall be calculated from the time when the Entered Apprentice Degree is conferred on him; those for a new member by affiliation shall be calculated from the time when his petition is accepted.

**THAT:** If the ballot on a petitioner for membership is favourable, the Master shall declare that the petitioner has been *elected* to receive the degrees. (Some Masters use the word "*eligible*" instead of "*elected*." There is a quite a difference in the meanings of the two words.)

**THAT:** If the Master be absent the Senior Warden, or in his absence, the Junior Warden, may preside and have the powers and perform the duties of the Master, except in the conferring of degrees. When presiding, a Warden will take his seat in front of the Master's Chair.